LW4637: CRIMINOLOGY

Effective Term
Semester A 2024/25

Part I Course Overview

Course Title
Criminology

Subject Code
LW - Law
Course Number
4637

Academic Unit
School of Law (FL)

College/School
School of Law (FL)

Course Duration
One Semester

Credit Units
3

Level
B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction
English

Medium of Assessment
English

Prerequisites
Nil

Precursors
Nil

Equivalent Courses
LW4137 Criminology (LLB) (from the old curriculum)
LW4137A Criminology (AMLLB) (from the old curriculum)
LW5637 Criminology

Exclusive Courses
Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

Criminology is an inter-disciplinary field that draws on a number of different academic traditions – including law, psychology, economics, anthropology, psychiatry, sociology, biology and statistics – to explain the causes and prevalence of criminal behaviour, and to propose appropriate preventative, punitive and rehabilitative measures in dealing with crime, the communities in which crimes take place, and its convicted offenders. Criminology, in other words, is the social scientific study of the prevention, causation, and correction of crime.

While some scholars regard criminology purely as a social science discipline (a sub-division of sociology) distinct from law and legal practice, criminology can, and has, historically played an important role in reforming criminal law and the criminal justice system. Criminology is particularly valuable as an applied discipline which may inform the various decision-makers and stakeholders in the criminal justice system to better understand the causes and prevalence of criminal behaviour and to implement appropriate preventative, punitive and rehabilitative measures in dealing with its effects. Nonetheless, given the School of Law's parallel courses in criminal law and in criminal justice, this elective will focus on the causation and prevention of crime, rather than on criminalisation and government responses to crime through the criminal justice system. Moreover, note that this course is intended for students with no prior background in criminology, and as such is not open to students from the double degree programme Bachelor of Social Sciences in Criminology and Bachelor of Laws.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Explain and critique the established criminological theories	25	x	x	
2	Interpret and critically evaluate empirical data and other sources of information that influence policy and public views on the causes, nature and the extent of crime	15	x	x	
3	Suggest how criminology can best assist the reform of criminal justice systems, particularly with regard to the causation, correction and prevention of crime and its effect on offenders, communities and victims	15	x	x	
4	Display effective research, writing and oral communication skills	25		x	
5	Suggest and critique methods of preventing, explaining and responding to crime in Hong Kong and East Asia more generally	20	x	x	x

A1: Attitude
Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability
Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments
Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

	LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures and Class Discussions	Students will take notes during lectures on theoretical and empirical content. Each lecture topic covered will be followed by an in-class discussion based on previously assigned questions, and/or written exercises. Students may critique and clarify the course material during lectures.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3
2	Reading, Research and Writing Outside of Class Times	Students should prepare for lectures by completing and reflecting on the set readings, and by making notes addressing forthcoming discussion questions and exercises. The group presentation will involve substantial self-directed research, writing and speaking practice.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Approx. 5

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks (e.g. Parameter for GenAI use)
1	In-Class Attendance and Participation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	Based upon contributions to in-class discussions and exercises, and oral critique of other students' group presentations
2	Group Presentation	4, 5	30	15-20 minute in-class presentation relaying and defending research assignment findings in randomly-allocated small groups within the cohort. Question focuses on a local or regional criminological topic

Continuous Assessment (%)

50

Examination (%)

50

Examination Duration (Hours)

2.5

Additional Information for ATs

Examination: 2.5 hour unseen essay-based examination testing knowledge and critical evaluation of lecture materials and readings. JD students will have to answer one more question than LLB students

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

1. In-Class Attendance and Participation (20%)

Criterion

Assessed on the basis of weekly attendance at lectures, oral and written contributions to in-class discussions and exercises, and oral critique of other groups' assignment presentations. Details of readings, discussion questions and exercises will be posted online the week before each lecture.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Student demonstrates a strong interest in and critical engagement with all course material, a significant understanding of established criminological theory, an exceptional ability to relate theory to the local context, clearly and persuasively communicated written or oral responses, and an obvious ability to listen to, empathise and engage with fellow students' responses.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Student demonstrates some critical engagement with course material, a more limited understanding of established criminological theory, a reasonable ability to relate theory to the local context, somewhat clear and persuasive communication by written or oral responses, and some ability to listen to and engage with fellow students' responses.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Student demonstrates limited critical engagement with course material, little understanding of established criminological theory, a basic ability to relate theory to the local context, unclear written or oral responses that do not entirely persuade, and only an occasional ability to listen to and engage with fellow students' responses.

Marginal (D)

Despite otherwise participating in the teaching and learning activities, the student demonstrates no critical engagement with course material, little or no understanding of established criminological theory, infrequent ability to apply theory to the local context, provides written or oral responses devoid of persuasion, and shows little interest in engaging with fellow students' responses.

Failure (F)

Almost no participation in teaching and learning activities. The student cannot demonstrate that he or she has read or understands the course material, or that he or she understands any of the major criminological theories. The student does not attempt to apply these theories to the local context, does not contribute written or oral responses when prompted, and demonstrates no engagement with the views of fellow students on the course material.

Assessment Task

2. Group Presentation (30%)

Criterion

15-20 minute in-class presentation relaying group research assignment findings. Each group member must speak. Assessed on the basis of oral presentation skills, visual aids if appropriate, timekeeping, and ability to defend findings against class and course leader critique. All group members receive the same mark, absent exceptional circumstances.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Student demonstrates a strong interest in and critical engagement with all course material, a significant understanding of established criminological theory, an exceptional ability to relate theory to the local context, clearly and persuasively

communicated written or oral responses, and an obvious ability to listen to, empathise and engage with fellow students' responses.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Student demonstrates some critical engagement with course material, a more limited understanding of established criminological theory, a reasonable ability to relate theory to the local context, somewhat clear and persuasive communication by written or oral responses, and some ability to listen to and engage with fellow students' responses.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Student demonstrates limited critical engagement with course material, little understanding of established criminological theory, a basic ability to relate theory to the local context, unclear written or oral responses that do not entirely persuade, and only an occasional ability to listen to and engage with fellow students' responses.

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Assessment Task

3. Examination (50%)

Criterion

2.5 hour unseen essay-based examination testing description, critical evaluation and ability to relay, discuss and compare lecture materials and readings on criminological theories and concepts.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Student demonstrates a strong interest in and critical engagement with all course material, a significant understanding of established criminological theory, an exceptional ability to relate theory to the local context, clearly and persuasively communicated written or oral responses, and an obvious ability to listen to, empathise and engage with fellow students' responses.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Student demonstrates some critical engagement with course material, a more limited understanding of established criminological theory, a reasonable ability to relate theory to the local context, somewhat clear and persuasive communication by written or oral responses, and some ability to listen to and engage with fellow students' responses.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

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Failure (F)

Almost no participation in teaching and learning activities. The student cannot demonstrate that he or she has read or understands the course material, or that he or she understands any of the major criminological theories. The student does not attempt to apply these theories to the local context, does not contribute written or oral responses when prompted, and demonstrates no engagement with the views of fellow students on the course material.

Additional Information for AR

Grading of Student Achievement: Standard (A+, A, A-⋯F).

Further details of the assessment scheme will be provided during the first lecture. Students will need to pay careful attention to their time management skills, and to the university's Academic Honesty policy: http://www.cityu.edu.hk/provost/academic_honesty/rules_on_academic_honesty.htm

To pass this course students must obtain an aggregate mark of 40% and a minimum of 30% in the examination component of the assessment.

Artificial Intelligence

The use of Generative AI tools is not allowed in completing assessment tasks for this course.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

- Introduction to Criminology
- Criminological Theory (3 lectures)
- Crime Statistics, Crime and the Media
- Race, Gender and Crime
- Violent Crime, Sexual Crime and Property Crime
- Alcohol, Drugs and Sex Work
- Corporate and Organised Crime
- Terrorism and Public Order Crimes
- Crime Victims

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Course Textbook: Tim Newburn, Criminology (3rd ed, Routledge 2017)
2	Students may purchase the course textbook from the campus bookshop or from online retailers. Copies of the course textbook are also available in the library's reserve section for short-term borrowing. Although there is an unofficial full-text version of the textbook available online, students may not use this version during the examination. Readings will be set from the course textbook for each of the nine course topics. Additional readings will be set from sources not limited to those below, and distributed to students at least one week before the next class.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Refer to the attached Reading List